

blazed out in hot declamation in many a tavern and on many a village green of Norfolk. These men, cried the popular orators of the stamp of a Kett, have all things ; the people nothing but misery, and to misery is added insult. " What pitiful creatures are these poor wretches, scoff our oppressors. Moreover, are we not treated like slaves, and turned adrift from house and holding at the nod of some noble or squire ? We will teach them what it means to cheat us out of our birthrights as men, or die in the attempt."

Under the inspiration of such outbursts, the men of Attleborough rose and threw down the fences of a neighbouring squire on the 20th June 1549. About three weeks later the men of Wymondham, assembled to celebrate the festival of the translation of St Thomas a Becket, rounded off the day's hilarity by a similar exploit. They threatened to deal with the enclosure of Robert Kett in like fashion. To their surprise and joy, Kett not only offered to destroy it with his own hands, but to become their leader " for the weal of the commonalty." Numerous recruits from the countryside swelled the rustic army, and with this rustic army Kett moved on Norwich, in spite of the inhibition of Sir Edmund Windham, the High Sheriff of Norfolk and Suffolk, who only escaped their vengeance by the fleetness of his horse. ^About the middle of July they finally pitched their camp on Mousehold, or Mussel Hill, overlooking Norwich. The camp became the focus of all the seething discontent in the county. By beacon and bell the people learned the great news, and while they poured from far and near by the hundred into the camp, until their numbers swelled to 16,000, Kett compelled the unwilling alliance of the mayor and council of Norwich. Here, under the Oak of Reformation, he sat in judgment on the county gentlemen. He was sparing of life, but not of property, and the camp at Mousehold was amply supplied with the spoil of the surrounding country. He nevertheless kept his followers under strict discipline, and had sermons preached by men like Mathew Parker, the future archbishop of Canterbury, and prayers read under the Oak of Reformation. He professed loyalty to the king, and dispensed natural justice in his name. What his notions of natural justice were we learn from the articles of grievances which he drew up in